Post 12/23/66

U.S. Reporte
LBJ's Ban o

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The Justice Department asserted yesterday that the Federal Government has abandoned the use of all electronic eavesdropping devices except in "national security" cases.

The Department's statement, issued in response to an inquiry, indicated that the eavesdropping prohibitions issued by President Johnson on June 30, 1965, had not only been carried out but had been interpreted in a stringent manner.

The President's order, classified as "Administratively Confidential," dealt with the dual problem of wiretapping and eavesdropping. Wiretapping, which is the interception of telephone conversations, was forbidden by the President except in two circumstances:

1. In national security cases ment apparently has gone beyond that prohibition in extending the eavesdropping ban to devices that the courts have not yet ruled illegal—devices

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been sanctioned by the Supreme Court, most recently in a ruling last week upholding the criminal conviction of a Nashville lawyer associated with Teamsters Union President James R. Hoffa.

The strict interpretation of the President's directive by the Justice Department at the present time is said to reflect the President's personal feelings about eavesdropping.

"His opposition to that kind of thing is almost emotional," said one Administration official. "It goes beyond the question of legal technicalities."

Congressional officials concerned with Government eavesdropping policies said they were certain that the Administration's prohibitions were being observed by all agencies, including the FBI.

"I would drop my teeth," said one Capitol Hill figure, "if I found out today that any 'bugging' was going on."

The full extent of the Government's past eavesdropping and wiretapping practices has never been revealed, although that information is apparently in the possession of Acting Attorney General Ramsey Clark.

The presidential directive of June, 1965, ordered "every agency head . . . (to) submit to the Attorney General within 30 days a complete inventory of all mechanical and electronic equipment and devices used for or capable of intercepting telephone conversations. In addition, such reports shall contain a list of any interceptions currently authorized and the reasons for them."

That inventory has been made, although the Justice Department refused to discuss it or to reveal what it disclosed.